

A SOLDIER OF COMMERCE

By JOHN ROE GORDON

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CHAPTER I.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF AN AMERICAN.

THE senior member of the firm of Townsend & Burdick, manufacturers of windmills, pumps and other appliances of that nature, was serenely contemplating in his New York office the increased revenues he would receive from the large sales to be made by Harvey Irons, their hustling, energetic representative in Russia. The last letter written by Mr. Townsend to Mr. Irons was to the effect that the latter's suggestion that a market could be had in Russia was a good one and for him to use his own judgment.

Thereafter there were no letters sent between the senior member and the agent, but cablegrams, mostly conveying large orders, frequently came from Mr. Irons, and other cablegrams, conveying money, were sent by Mr. Townsend. Orders came from St. Petersburg, Moscow and other cities. As time went on the increase of business gave warrant for the rosy hue of Mr. Townsend's dreams.

While Mr. Townsend was contemplating his happy future he was startled at receiving the following message from Paris:

Expelled from Russia. Going back another way. IRONS.

As Mr. Townsend was somewhat hazy on the subject of Russia and had no information as to how Irons had gone in on his first visit, it can easily be imagined that Mr. Townsend had very little idea of what the other way of going back chosen by Mr. Irons might be.

He cabled to Harvey Irons as follows:

What do you mean? Answer at once. TOWNSEND.

He waited in vain for an answer. He became greatly perturbed and conferred with his partner.

"Tell you, Burdick," he said, "Irons must be in trouble. I can learn nothing. There is something left unexplained."

"There always was," said Mr. Burdick, "Irons is a man who acts according to what he finds on the spot. We can't sit in New York and tell him what to do in Russia. If he says he is expelled and is going back, he is going back. Leave him alone."

"I can do nothing else," said Mr. Townsend, "as I do not know where he is."

"I do. He is in Russia. Just wait. You will get big orders from Russia yet. Irons against the entire police of the empire. My confidence in him is so unshakable I believe—well, I'll bet you a thousand dollars he turns up all right with Russian orders."

"I'll not take the bet. I share your confidence. We'll wait."

And so they waited.

Hafiz Effendi sat crosslegged on a divan watching the passing show. Hafiz Effendi was himself a part of the show, but this did not concern him. Hafiz was morose.

"Curses upon the Muscovite!" he muttered as he drew long breaths from his chibouk and watched an elderly Christian and his daughter pass by. "The new law is in effect and the bride for the prince not yet obtained. And Mizik, the officer of the ameer, will soon be here to ascertain the truth."

Hafiz Effendi had not traveled all the way from Constantinople simply to witness the fair at Tiflis. Hafiz had made his wealth in the business of supplying wealthy Osmanli with pretty Circassian or Georgian girls for their wives, and his income had been rudely stopped by the new order of the czar. The hated Muscovite government had interdicted the trade in women which had made Circassian and Georgian infamously famous.

Here was the annual fair at Tiflis under full sway, and all the wealth and beauty of the Caucasus were present.

Hafiz Effendi shook his head, grunted another curse against the Muscovite and then, placing his chibouk in the care of Muley, the keeper of the bazaar, wandered, or, rather, waddled, round the gay streets of the fair. Following in his wake was a tall, handsome young officer, whose uniform, as well as his accent, proclaimed him to be from St. Petersburg.

"Ah," said this officer to himself as he saw the frown on the face of the Turk, "our friend Hafiz seems indignant. He eyes every pretty woman with something like greed. I'll keep my eye on him."

For Captain Sergius Orskoff was in command of the department of the service that had for its object the obliteration of the slave trade between the Caucasus and Persia and Turkey.

Men from all parts were at Tiflis, exhibiting in the bazaars rugs and coats of rare wools from Persia, silks from China, costly pipes of every conceivable shape and size carved by hand by the men of Trebizond, shoes from Massachusetts, knives from England—in short, the products of the world were spread out that those who walked could see and perchance purchase.

Hafiz Effendi turned and saw the steely eyes of Captain Orskoff fixed upon him.

"It is a great fair, excellency," he

said, with his usual Turkish salutation. "It is one that brings the world together."

"Good enough; but remember there is nothing sold here save what is exhibited for sale."

The Turk opened his eyes wide, as if in astonishment. "Who could have asked more? Is there not enough?" he asked, gazing at a pretty Circassian who passed with a soldier.

"Yes, it seems enough; only remember," said Orskoff, walking off with scant courtesy.

"Pigs! Dogs! These Muscovites are unbearable!" growled Hafiz.

He left the busy portion of the fair, went to the baths, returned to the bazaar kept by his friend Muley and resumed his pipe. The passing show seemed endless. Officers in brilliant uniforms, merchants, women of every degree, crowded the thoroughfares. The reverie of Hafiz was interrupted.

"How is the day? Does the sun shine full upon thee, O Hafiz Effendi?" asked a soft voice at his side. He beheld a warrior of some peculiar race, dark skinned and gayly uniformed.

"Ah, hast thou come, O Mizik? The day is well. The sun never fails to shine upon the faithful," replied Hafiz.

"It is so, O wise and mighty Hafiz."

"And how is my friend, the great and heaven born ameer of Bokhara?" asked Hafiz.

"Our lord is well, but he is growing impatient that thy mission has not yet been fulfilled. It was told to me in the sacred precincts of the palace to come to Tiflis, seek out Hafiz Effendi and ascertain if he has found what the ameer wishes."

"The prettiest woman in all Georgia," said Hafiz, with a smile.

"For the bride of our young Prince Davouca. And thou hast been promised much wealth, Hafiz Effendi."

"It is true, and I have found the young woman. But the accursed Muscovite ruler has made a new law which prohibits the sale of the women. We must work slowly and with caution."

"Then is the thing that is so near the heart of my lord, that his son shall have the most beautiful bride in the world, an impossibility?"

"I did not say it was an impossibility," said Hafiz testily. "It is dangerous. Speak in a low tone. Better, come to the kahve kept by my brother. There we can talk."

Hafiz led the way to a coffee house, where they resumed their chat.

"While you are in Tiflis look not upon the women," said Hafiz. "The Muscovite emperor has made this new law, and there are soldiers to spy upon us and compel us to obey. It is absurd, for these women are happier when in the luxury their Osmanli husbands give them than with these pigs and dogs, who are rude and have no wealth."

"But why has the czar made this law?"

"Because he likes not the fact that our princes have more than one wife."

"And has he, the ruler of the greatest country on earth, not more than one?"

"It has been said."

"By the horn of the sacred bull?"

"But come, if thou art refreshed with my brother's coffee, let us depart. I would show you something."

"Ah, then you are choosing that beautiful one?"

"She is chosen. Hold thy tongue and accompany me."

And Mizik, thinking hard upon this new law, followed his guide from the kahve.

CHAPTER II.

A BEAUTIFUL GIRL AND A MYSTERIOUS CONTRACT.

P LACID in his bazaar a Persian merchant sat studying the crowds that stopped and examined his goods when Hafiz Effendi led Mizik, the agent of the ameer, to a seat at the farther end of the Persian divan and purchased tobacco and pipes, taking one himself and filling the other for Mizik.

"Sit where you are, watching at all times the door of the large linen bazaar opposite," said Hafiz when the pipes were smoked satisfactorily. "There you will see what you will see."

Mizik kept his eyes on the object spoken of by the Turk. The linen bazaar was larger, cleaner, better equipped and gave more evidence of prosperity than any other portion of the fair within sight. Bales of finest linen were displayed. Near the end of a long table could be seen an elderly merchant in Georgian costume watching his several employees handle and sell his goods.

"That, my friend from Bokhara," said Hafiz, "is Ignatz Biartekis, the richest merchant in Tiflis."

"And will he supply that for which I came?"

"He will."

"Good. Why do we not go to him instead of sitting idly here?"

"For the excellent reason, my friend, that he does not know he is going to perform this generous act."

Mizik shook his head again. He did not understand this slow and laborious method. His way, the way of his people, would have been to attack Tiflis and take what was wanted. Mizik had not yet learned the power of the arm

that reaches from St. Petersburg to the Caspian. Suddenly he started from his seat.

"Curses!" said Hafiz. "You will be shot, and you will have me shot by the Muscovite. There he is."

"There she is!" said Mizik breathlessly.

"There he is, as I have spoken. His eyes are not now turned this way, but hold yourself with calmness. Orskoff knows things when he sees them."

At that moment the officer mentioned, who had been sauntering along the crowded street, stopped to speak to a girl who had come to the door of the bazaar of Ignatz Biartekis. She was a girl who would cause others than Mizik to stare. Her complexion was like the blush of a peach. Her eyes were black and shaded with long, silky lashes. Her hair was long and fell in a raven flood below her waist. She wore a tall, bejeweled headdress that made her seem almost statuesque. From her shoulders a long, elegant covering of lace barely hid a gown that might have come from Paris. On her feet were tiny patent leather shoes from the bazaar of the Jewish trader two doors away. Upon her fingers were various rings—diamonds, rubies and sapphires. Jeweled bracelets were upon her wrists. Her form was elegance endowed with human life. The combination of the modern and the characteristic dress of her people made so charming a tout ensemble that all who passed the bazaar paused to gaze at the girl.

"Would that one content the mighty prince of Bokhara?" asked Hafiz slyly.

"Would she? She is fit for the wife of a ruler of gods! Who is she?"

"That, my friend, is the daughter of Ignatz Biartekis."

"Her name?"

"Kour."

"Sons of heaven! Would he part with her?"

"Rather with his life."

"Then of what avail is all our talk?"

Hafiz noted the dejected look on Mizik's face.

"My friend, thou art not experienced in the world," he said. "I have spoken. That is to be the wife of the son of the ameer."

"Our heaven born lord will lead you with the jewels of the earth."

"I intend that he shall. It is for no small amount that I take this risk. Look the other way. The accursed Orskoff is turning."

As the handsome soldier moved away the girl smiled archly at him, and he saluted her in courtly fashion.

"I will drink his blood!" muttered Mizik.

"Be careful, my friend, that he does not drink yours," said Hafiz. "That man knows how to fight. His sword is no stranger to the hearts of his enemies. Come, let us move along. I do not wish to be seen too long opposite that bazaar. There will be a stir when the thing is known."

Again they went to the kahve kept by the brother of Hafiz.

"Let us, my friend, talk over this matter," said the Turk after ordering coffee.

"I came for that," said Mizik shortly.

"I do not need to ask that your mouth be kept shut," said Hafiz. "If our purpose were known, it is possible that the great ruler of all the tribes of the Caucasus would send his armies to sweep your people from Bokhara."

"Let them come; we are very powerful!"

Hafiz grinned derisively.

"Nevertheless keep your tongue silent. Now, admitting that I am capable of getting the girl and conveying her as far as the Caspian, how shall I deliver her to you?"

"On the Caspian there is a vessel manned by brave men from the ameer's dominion. They are Taujiks, as I am,

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JOE MULHATTEN, JR., WRITES ABOUT

THINGS POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS.

Carter's Landing, Ky., Editor News:—We read a heap these days about Democratic harmony. Well, it looks much like harmony. There are the Bryan Democrats, the Parker Democrats, the Hill Democrats, the gold bug, the free silver and several other ites; but there isn't but one man in our opinion that is a Democrat worthy of the stamp and that's William Jennings Bryan, of Lincoln, Neb. The Republican Democrats, Gold Bugs, we mean, dub him Boy Orator, Anarchist, Socialist and the like. Why all of this? Simply because he has convictions and won't stand for J. Peirpont Morgan, Cleveland & Co. to dictate to him. Then tell us Democrats why we should swallow a dose like Parker. They tell us Parker voted for Bryan in 1900. So did Watterson, Hill, Cleveland, Carlisle & Co. Nit! Our great and only Henry Watterson. Oh! what a hypocrite.

At one time we thought Watterson one of the greatest reformers of the age. He fought corporations, trusts and the like until 1890, or thereabouts. Then came a bid in the Legislature, an anti-trust bill, doing away with such things. Did Mr. Watterson support that bill? Not on your tinfole. But there came an editorial in the Courier-Journal from the pen of this great editor, telling the people why this bill should be defeated. Right there our faith in this reformer dropped eighty feet below zero. Such men as this we are asked to support for President.

If we are to have a Republican administration let's have it straight, though we can't agree with Roosevelt on his social equality ideas. There isn't but one place under the sun we will meet the negro on equality and that's at church. We would kneel by the side of a negro and pray just the same as with a white man, but when it comes to dining and rooming with him we will be glad if we will do it. Teddy can eat and sleep with them out old Mull went.

There is one question we can agree on with Teddy and that's race suicide. We agree with him there if we are an old bachelor. We love children till they get to trying their living capacity. Then we disappear around the corner. We want to

say right here if the Democrats don't nominate a Democrat that is a Democrat we will vote for Roosevelt and the multiplication and replenishing of the earth. This thing of voting for a yellow dog just because he is stamped a Republican or Democrat—that's old foggyism. There is another thing we don't like. If a man hasn't had the good luck to be born and bred in New York and crossed the Brooklyn bridge or been initiated into Wall Street, he isn't eligible to the presidency. Just to think of one state ruling the whole United States. That's to much Johnson.

Talk about farce, hypocrisy and the like. Just wait till next fall and listen to the politicians tell us laboring people how they love us. Watch them rave and shed tears over us. As soon as the election is over they love us no more until election time again.

There is one man in this Breckenridge county who the farmers ought to stand by. That's Dave Moorman. All the farmers got out of the Legislature was a \$15,000 appropriation for the State fair. Would have lost that if it had not been for Dave and a few other good men.

There is one thing, Mr. Editor, I can't agree with you on and that's your idea about teaching the Sunday school class. If the church and Sunday school are not the places to teach hell-fire where should it be taught? Ought we to spend six days in the week in pursuit of the dollar and then spend Sunday teaching our children the art of money getting? We say not. For what purpose is our Sunday-school classes if they are not to teach them the way to heaven and to avoid the road that leads to eternal punishment? Too much hell-fire, you say. If there be no hell-fire why have churches at all? Some will tell you God is just and good—he will not punish his children. Would he be a just God if he did not punish the wicked and reward the just? Would he be a just God if he rewarded the murderer, the drunkard, the fornicator, the robber, just the same as the just man? God has said there is a hell. Will you deny it, if you do teach them business methods?

Joe Mulhatten, Jr.

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Not Very Often.

"You officeholders," sneered the man who was vainly trying to be one. "don't die very often, do you?"

"No," replied the man who was one as he smiled benignly, "only once."

The fool and his money are the hope of Wall Street.—Schoolmaster.

Worst of All Experiences.

Can anything be worse than to feel that every minute will be your last. Such was the experience of Mrs. S. H. Newson, Dectura, Ala. "For three years" she writes, "I endured insufferable pain from indigestion, stomach and bowel trouble. Death seemed inevitable when doctors and all remedies failed. At length I was induced to try Electric Bitters and the result was miraculous. I improved at once and now I'm completely recovered." For Liver, Kidney, Stomach and Bowel troubles Electric Bitters is the only medicine. Only 50c. It's guaranteed by Short & Haynes, ruggrists.

Death List Reaches 883.

New York, June 22.—That the Slocum had no life preservers aboard less than nine years old was admitted by counsel of the Knickerbocker Steamship company at the inquest today. Evidence also brought out that the United States inspectors did not examine the fire hose and standpipes and the preservers were not in good shape. Today thirty-seven bodies came to the surface making the total number recovered 883. Of these 778 were identified.

Driven To Desperation.

Living at an out of the way place, remote from civilization, a family is often driven to desperation in case of accident, resulting in Burns, Cuts, Wounds, Ulcers, etc. Lay in a supply of Bucklen's Arnica Salve. It's the best on earth. 25c. at Short & Haynes Drug Store.

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Vermont Uninstructed.

Burlington, Vt., June 22.—The Democrats of the Vermont State convention declined to instruct the state delegates to the national convention to vote for the nomination of Judge Parker for president, but a motion was adopted giving expression to the opinion that Parker is the most available candidate. The delegates were instructed to act as a unit on all questions.

North Dakota Uninstructed.

After two hours of wrangling over an amendment to the report of the resolution committee to endorse the Kansas City platform, the North Dakota State Democratic convention, last week, voted down the amendment and will send an uninstructed delegation to the St. Louis convention.

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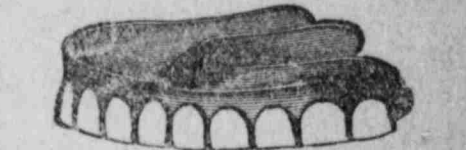
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